

All licensed clinicians/practitioners are required to maintain their license by being involved in continuing education on a regular basis per their licensing board. When visiting your clinician look for his/her active license. This is not typically just the beautifully framed license, but also a smaller piece of paper that states the license expiration date. If this is not displayed, or your clinician cannot produce this, his/her license may not be active. After meeting your clinician/practitioner decide if you feel comfortable with that individual. If not, you have the right to choose another professional.

When you see your clinician/practitioner, especially for the first time, you need to be prepared for him/her to complete an interview/psychosocial assessment. A complete history will be taken including your complete medication regimen (i.e., all prescribed medications, over-the-counter or OTC medications, vitamins and other supplements including diet aids or oral and injected steroids, etc.) in order to determine the best course of treatment. Failure to provide complete and accurate information may result in you cheating yourself out of the best possible treatment or could even be dangerous. Whenever there is a change in your medication regimen you need to advise all of your clinicians/practitioners.

Never be afraid to ask questions such as:

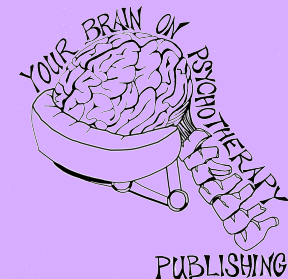
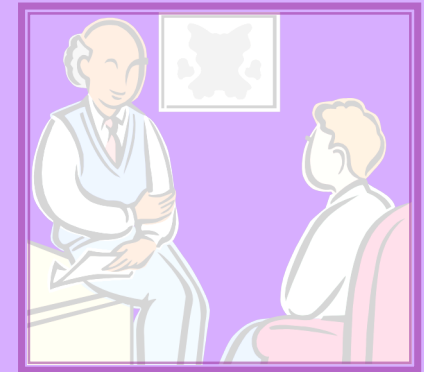
- ✓ Are you in my insurance plan?
- ✓ If not in my plan do you have a sliding scale?
- ✓ How long will I need to see you?
- ✓ What are your emergency procedures?
- ✓ If I need a psychotherapist can you give me resources?
- ✓ How long do I need to wait for an appointment?
- ✓ Will I see you each visit or your assistant?
- ✓ What type of therapy do you practice?
- ✓ If I don't feel we are a good fit how can I find another clinician?
- ✓ Who gets information about my treatment?
- ✓ Develop additional questions on your own.

A Brief Word On Medication

Not everyone will want or need to take medication to help manage symptoms. However, if you and your clinician decide to try medication, become knowledgeable and responsible! Learn the names of your medication(s), purpose of your medication(s), appropriate times to be taken, and potential side effects. Follow the label directions unless otherwise directed by your personal clinician. Never abruptly stop your medication regimen, but contact your clinician if there are problems or questions and you will be correctly directed. Never share your medications with anyone or take the prescription medication of another individual, even if you share similar symptoms or diagnoses!

Research suggests that symptoms/issues respond better with medication (if necessary) and psychotherapy in combination, rather than medication alone.

How to Select A Mental Health Clinician/ Practitioner



Debbie Edmunds, MA, LPC-Supervisor
www.HopePsychotherapyofHouston.com

Here is a chart to help you know who to select. You need to know how to select your clinician/practitioner based on your needs.

Type of Clinician/ Practitioner	*Typical Level of Education	*Typical Service
Psychiatrist (MD, DO)	Medical degree; referred to as doctor	Performs biopsychosocial evaluations, psychotropic medication management; and occasionally does psychotherapy.
Psychologist (e.g., PhD, PsyD, EdD)	Doctoral degree in clinical psychology or a variety of other fields; referred to as doctor	Often does psychological testing, IQ testing, neuropsychological testing and educational testing. May do psychotherapy.
Psychotherapist/ Counselor (e.g., MA , MS, MEd, LPC , LCSW, LMFT)	Masters degree in clinical psychology or a variety of other fields	Does counseling and psychotherapy. Usually utilizes talk-therapy, play therapy and other forms of therapy based on training and therapeutic orientation (e.g., Cognitive/Behavioral therapy).
Nurse Practitioner	Nursing degree	Prescribes psychotropic medication; typically does not do psychotherapy.

*Definitions, educational requirements and services may differ from state to state. Do your homework and ask questions to ensure you have selected the appropriate professional.

*Debbie Edmunds, MA, LPC-Supervisor
H.O.P.E. Psychotherapy of Houston, PLLC
17510 Huffmeister Road, #103
Cypress, TX 77429
www.HopePsychotherapyOfHouston.com
281-373-5200*